

FOCUS

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2004 Annual Vital Statistics

Missourians reached a record 76.8 years of life expectancy according to provisional 2004 vital statistics. This represents a four-tenths of a year increase from the 2003 Missouri life expectancy of 76.4 years, but it is still less than the 77.6 years for the United States in 2003. Both male and female life expectancy reached record highs in 2004. Missouri female life expectancy increased from 78.9 in 2003 to 79.3 years in 2004 while male life expectancy increased from 73.8 to 74.1 years in the same time period. The improved life expectancy reflects a four percent decline in the overall death rate from 9.7 per 1,000 population in 2003 to 9.3 in 2004.

The ten leading causes of death remained in virtually the same order as in 2003, with just one change in the 10th position. Heart disease was the state's number one killer, followed by cancer, stroke, chronic lung disease, unintentional injuries, diabetes, pneumonia and influenza, Alzheimer's disease, kidney disease and suicide. Suicide replaced blood poisoning as the tenth leading cause in 2004. Deaths due to seven of the ten leading causes (heart, stroke, chronic lung disease, unintentional injury, diabetes, pneumonia and influenza and kidney disease) decreased in 2004, while the remaining three (cancer, Alzheimer's disease and suicide) all increased.

Table 1

Vital Statistics for Missouri: 1994, 2003 and Provisional 2004

	<i>Numbers</i>			<i>Rates per 1,000 Population</i>		
	<i>1994</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004 (Prov)</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004 (Prov)</i>
Births	73,279	76,960	77,709	13.8	13.5	13.5
Deaths	53,611	55,195	53,787	10.1	9.7	9.3
Natural increase	19,668	21,765	23,922	3.7	3.8	4.2
Marriages	46,115	41,295	40,824	8.7	7.2	7.1
Divorces	26,441	22,166	21,700	5.0	3.9	3.8
Infant deaths	597	599	583	8.1 *	7.8 *	7.5 *
Abortions	14,119	12,476	11,871	192.7 *	162.1 *	152.8 *
Population (1000s)	5,324	5,719	5,755			

*Per 1,000 live births

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Table 2
Leading Causes of Death with Rates: Missouri Residents 1994, 2003 and Provisional 2004

	<i>Numbers</i>			<i>Rates per 100,000 Population</i>		
	<i>1994</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004 (Prov)</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004 (Prov)</i>
<u>Leading Causes of Death</u>						
Heart	18,217	16,310	15,432	342.2	285.2	268.2
Cancer	12,029	12,295	12,429	225.9	215.0	216.0
Lung cancer	3,619	3,772	4,023	68.0	66.0	69.9
Stroke	3,842	3,556	3,483	72.2	62.2	60.5
Chronic lung disease	2,483	2,942	2,738	46.6	51.4	47.6
Unintentional injury	2,167	2,643	2,639	40.7	46.2	45.9
Motor vehicle	1,108	1,202	1,087	20.8	21.0	18.9
Falls	389	556	609	7.3	9.7	10.6
Poisonings	140	417	471	2.6	7.3	8.2
Other	530	468	472	10.0	8.2	8.2
Diabetes	1,190	1,653	1,466	22.4	28.9	25.5
Pneumonia & influenza	2,236	1,624	1,406	42.0	28.4	24.4
Alzheimer's disease	428	1,293	1,384	8.0	22.6	24.1
Nephritis & nephrosis	599	1,092	1,080	11.3	19.1	18.8
Suicide	740	691	728	13.9	12.1	12.6
Septicemia	465	734	696	8.7	12.8	12.1
Homicide	623	333	381	11.7	5.8	6.6
AIDS	475	124	144	8.9	2.2	2.5
Maternal Deaths	8	12	4	10.9 **	15.6 **	5.1 **

**Per 100,000 live births

Heart disease has been the leading cause of death in Missouri for 85 consecutive years since 1920. However, deaths due to heart disease have been declining for several decades while cancer mortality has been fairly stable and thus the gap between heart disease and cancer mortality has been narrowing. Thirty years ago the gap was more than 10,000 deaths; ten years ago it was 6,000, and in 2004 it had dropped to just 3,000. If the current trend continues, cancer will overtake heart disease as the state's number one killer by 2016. As reported by the American Cancer Society, cancer already is the leading cause of death for persons under age 85 nationally, and this has been true in Missouri as well since 2001.

Advances in medical technology, the use of various drugs to lower cholesterol levels and control hypertension, and decreased smoking levels have helped reduce heart disease deaths. While

there have been advances in the treatment of cancer, they have been less dramatic.

Among other leading causes of death, pneumonia and influenza decreased by 13.5 percent, diabetes decreased by 11.3 percent, and stroke deaths decreased by 2.1 percent. The reduction in pneumonia and influenza deaths, primarily due to the lack of a major flu epidemic, probably also helped to reduce total deaths beyond pneumonia and influenza in 2004. The presence or lack of a flu epidemic can have a major effect on other causes of death, particularly chronic diseases. While there was little change in total unintentional injury deaths, motor vehicle crash deaths declined sharply, while other injury deaths such as falls and poisonings increased. Homicides and AIDS deaths both increased in 2004 after reaching low points in 2003.

Table 3
Trends in Maternal and Child Health Statistics: Missouri 1994, 2003 and Provisional 2004

	<i>Numbers</i>			<i>Percents</i>		
	<i>1994</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004 (Prov.)</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004 (Prov.)</i>
Infant Deaths	597	599	583	8.1 *	7.8 *	7.5 *
White	398	420	406	6.6 *	6.6 *	6.4 *
Black	192	164	168	16.4 *	14.9 *	14.9 *
Low Birth Weight	5,557	6,194	6,440	7.6	8.0	8.3
White	3,853	4,524	4,639	6.4	7.1	7.3
Black	1,592	1,489	1,574	13.6	13.5	14.0
Inadequate Prenatal Care	9,646	7,383	7,490	13.4	10.1	10.1
White	5,960	5,145	5,088	10.1	8.4	8.3
Black	3,475	1,926	2,050	30.6	19.8	19.9
Preterm (<37 weeks)	8,673	10,329	10,352	11.8	13.4	13.3
Multiple Births	2,005	2,618	2,618	2.7	3.4	3.4
Birth Spacing<18 mos.	4,921	4,632	4,877	12.0	10.8	11.2
Out-of Wedlock Births	23,845	27,363	28,704	32.5	35.6	37.0
Teen(10-19) Births	10,794	8,775	8,891	14.7	11.4	11.4
Early Teen (10-17) Births	4,087	2,843	2,767	5.6	3.7	3.6
Smoking During Pregnancy	15,111	13,895	14,083	20.6	18.1	18.1
Medicaid Births	29,683	33,436	35,424	41.6	45.4	47.6
WIC Births	28,240	30,897	32,382	39.6	42.0	43.6
Food Stamps Births	16,500	15,708	17,710	23.1	21.4	23.8
C-Sections	15,483	21,320	22,832	21.1	27.7	29.4
Live Births	73,279	76,960	77,709			

*Infant Death rates are per 1,000 live births.

The infant death rate decreased in 2004, from 7.8 to 7.5 per 1,000 live births. However, the Missouri infant death rate remains above the 2004 national rate of 6.6 per 1,000 live births. The decrease in 2004 infant mortality primarily reflected a decrease in babies weighing less than 1.1 pounds. Approximately 90 percent of these small babies die so even a relatively small decrease of 48 such births had a major impact on infant mortality.

Despite the decrease in very small babies, the overall rate of low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds) rose from 8.0 percent in 2003 to 8.3 percent in 2004, the highest such rate in more than 40 years. The largest increase was in moderately low birth weight (3.3-5.5 pounds) infants.

Other maternal and child health indicators show the following in 2004:

- Live births increased by 1 percent to 77,709, the highest count since 1991.
- Multiple births remained at 3.4 percent of births, the same as 2003, but 26 percent above the 1994 rate.
- The rate of out-of wedlock births reached another record high, 37.0 percent.
- Short (less than 18 months) spacing between births increased among 2004 births from 10.8 percent in 2003 to 11.2 percent.
- The rates of Medicaid, WIC, and Food Stamp births all increased in 2004. These trends probably reflect continued slow economic growth.

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- Abortions decreased by 3.8 percent, from 12,476 in 2003 to 12,000, the lowest number of abortions in nearly 30 years.
- Teen births increased by 1.3 percent, but early teen (less than age 18) births decreased by 2.7 percent.
- Inadequate prenatal care remained at 10.1 percent, tying the record low of 2003.
- C-Sections increased by 7 percent in the last year and 47 percent since 1994, reaching a record high of 29.4 percent of all births.

Marriages and divorces both declined in 2004. Marriages decreased from 41,295 to 40,824 while divorces decreased from 22,166 to 21,700. Both represent long-term declines. Marriages are at their lowest level since 1965, while divorces haven't been lower since 1972. These trends are certainly related, as there are fewer couples marrying there are also fewer couples available to divorce.